

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Tymniak Says Connecticut Consumers Can Now Freeze their Credit Information**



State Rep. Cathy C. Tymniak, R-133<sup>rd</sup>, Fairfield, Westport, said today that new legislation allows Connecticut residents beginning January 1, 2006, to place a freeze on their credit information as a step toward preventing identity theft. Connecticut now joins several other states that authorize the credit freeze.

Rep. Tymniak, who is ranking member of the legislature's Banks Committee, reported that the legislature in 2005 adopted several bills to protect consumers and fight identity theft, which she noted is one the fastest growing crimes in America.

"People, especially senior citizens, now have the right to inform the three national credit reporting agencies to place a freeze on their credit reports," said Rep. Tymniak. "In this way, thieves will be deprived of access to details of your personal finances."

"Senior citizens can be vulnerable to identity theft, and generally do not have the need to apply for new credit," said Rep. Tymniak. "Therefore, they would especially benefit from placing a freeze on their financial information."

"Once someone has misused your financial information to open new accounts and steal thousands of dollars, it can take months or years to sort out the damage and repair your credit," Rep. Tymniak noted.

The legislation, SB 650, allows a consumer to inform the three credit agencies in writing to freeze his or her credit report. It also requires businesses such as banks or credit card companies to inform affected consumers if there has been a security breach involving their computerized personal information.

The law prohibits a credit rating agency from releasing a frozen credit report, or any information in it, without the consumer's express authorization. It requires an agency to freeze a report in five business days. The law creates a means by which a consumer can release his report, permanently, temporarily, or to a specific third party. It allows agencies to charge a consumer up to \$10 for each freeze or removal and up to \$12 for a temporary removal for a specific third party.

The law requires a business that has suffered a security breach involving personal information to disclose it to affected consumers, generally without unreasonable delay. It generally requires the notice to be given in writing, by telephone or electronically.

Rep. Tymniak also noted other legislation related to identity theft adopted in 2005 included HB 6696, An act preventing bank or credit union impersonation and misleading advertisements and HB 6831, An act preventing bank fraud and identity theft.

Rep. Tymniak said her office can provide further information on this new consumer legislation upon request.

Rep. Tymniak serves the 133<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District of Fairfield and Westport.